

14 July 1965

The National Intelligence Survey is a systematic and continuous interdepartmental program which one of the first National Security Council directives established in 1948 to provide the Government with coordinated intelligence on the basic and relatively unchanging characteristics of foreign countries world-wide. NSCID #3 laid on the Program as a consequence of World War II experience with critical gaps, often disagreement, and duplicative effort in materials produced by various Government components on an uncoordinated basis. USIB recently re-examined and reaffirmed the NIS mission, with confirmation by special survey of the Unified and Specified Commands.

The published NIS on each foreign country or area is a digest which is comprehensive in scope and generally of the depth of detail appropriate for high-level policy and planning purposes (although, for example, circumstances during the 1958 Lebanon landings, the Congo crisis, and trouble in the Panama made NIS a principal source for initial operational requirements for the military forces involved). The broad topics covered are Military Geography, Transportation and Telecommunications, Sociological, Political, Economic, Scientific, and Armed Forces. NIS on Marine Climate and Oceanography cover the world ocean areas. Classification is Confidential or above.

The one-volume General Survey is the primary NIS unit published on an area. This may be the entire NIS coverage for one of the

smaller countries. For larger countries, the General Survey is selectively supplemented by other NIS units, when appropriate, to provide the more extensive coverage required by such topics as Coasts and Landing Beaches, Ports and Naval Facilities, Characteristics of the People, and Health and Sanitation. With initial world coverage essentially completed, NIS emphasis is now on issuance of updated revisions as rapidly as permitted by capabilities. Emphasis on the General Surveys permits accelerated NIS coverage and updating, and present scheduling will put General Survey updating for principal countries on a 2 to 3 year cycle.

The NIS is produced on a programmed basis rather than being crisis or problem oriented. Through forehanded collection and production, its mission is to be available in published form -- in Washington, outside Washington, and among the Commands and foreign posts -- when need arises. The mission of the NIS, rather than being to provide highly current intelligence which is the field of others, is to provide on-hand basic information which is widely and economically used to assist in the production of more transitory, or estimative, or special-purpose intelligence. Recent examples were the publication of the NIS General Survey on Panama, The Dominican Republic and Vietnam.

Production of NIS utilizes the specialized know-how and production capabilities of Government components which include not only those in

the Intelligence Community and the Services but such others as Agriculture, Commerce, HEW, Interior, and Labor. Some 40 individual components are involved in production of NIS topics allocated according to their specialized fields. CIA directly and through contracts is now responsible for some 60% of the production units annually, DIA for some 40%. State provides informational support and substantive commentary on draft NIS. The published NIS is the top of a pyramid of detailed information which remains in the hands of producing components and is available for their specialized needs.

Under USIB, the programming and accomplishment of NIS coverage is coordinated by the interagency NIS Committee, a USIB committee whose members represent both the requirements and production capabilities of the agencies. The NIS schedule must reflect the Committee's considered accommodation to the many factors involved in the interagency production. It considers: 1) indicated consumer requirements, 2) the amount of contributor effort available for NIS production, 3) extent of NIS coverage, 4) appropriateness of units to supplement the US, and 5) a decision on the need for initial coverage as weighed against the need for revision of units already published.

The DCI and CIA are responsible for administration of the Program and publication of the NIS. The working-level focal point in the Program is CIA's Office of Basic Intelligence, where a staff of some 75 experienced professionals performs the coordinative and final

review and processing of the materials from the wide range of contributing agencies.

We do not create the NIS requirements but, rather, incorporate into one package the individual requirements of several agencies. And like the proverbial iceberg, the visible part of the program is small compared with the submerged structure of available intelligence which keeps it afloat.

The NIS does involve a considerable effort in the intelligence community. It takes patience, perspective, and discipline to develop comprehensive basic intelligence. But the alternative is uncoordinated departmental programs essentially duplicative and, therefore, costly.